

**MUSIC FOR CAROLINE:
INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM IN THE
ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOM**

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COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

MUSIC FOR CAROLINE: INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM IN THE
ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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BACHELOR OF MUSIC
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BY
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Thesis Advisor

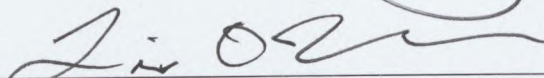


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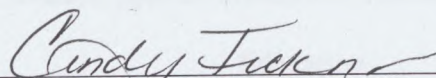


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to research and analyze the history of special education, special education in music, and Autism. The goal is to provide elementary general music educators with a detailed understanding of the history of special education and ways to modify lessons to accommodate students with special needs, specifically Autism.

Through an analysis of special education history and the legislation that has impacted special education, music educators may find new ways to teach students of varying learning levels. Understanding the medical definition and characteristics of Autism should help educators modify existing lessons or develop new lessons that allow all students, including those with Autism, to participate in music lessons to their fullest capabilities.

INDEX WORDS: Autism, Special Education, Special Education Legislation, Music

Education

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Including Students with Autism in the Elementary General Music Classroom

I was eleven when my baby sister Caroline was born, and since then, Caroline has shaped so much of who I am. We are the oldest and youngest of four children, and we share a love and passion for music. Music is a language, therapy, and friend for both of us. To me, she is Caroline, but to many people, Caroline comes with a label: autistic. This label puts her in multiple therapies and classes in school that remove her from the general student population. She is also required to remain with a paraprofessional for most of the school day. Caroline's autism is coupled with learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), social communication disorder, dysgraphia, generalized anxiety disorder, and borderline intellectual functioning. Although she is pulled out from many of her classes, she attends music, art, and P.E. with the rest of her classmates. It is my belief that despite her impairments, Caroline has a right to a proper music education and classroom experience.

The field of special education has gone through many important changes within the last few decades. Throughout this time, music educators have adapted to each new change, especially in regard to the movement toward inclusive practices. As a result of inclusion, the role of many music educators and therapists in schools has changed. The focus of this paper will be on students with Autism because Autism is one of the fastest growing developmental disorders in the United States, and 1 out of every 68 students is diagnosed with Autism (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). This paper will provide perspective on the history of special education, special education in music, and the definition and characteristics of Autism so music teachers may understand more clearly how to accommodate students with Autism in music lessons.

Note: For the purposes of this paper, the language used will reflect the prevalent language of the time period being discussed. Today, people recognize many of the words that were used

throughout history to describe special education as being offensive and inappropriate. The language in this paper will change as the time periods being discussed do as well.

History of Special Education in the United States

Before the 1950s, many students with disabilities were excluded from attending public schools. Although children with more severe disabilities were forced either to stay home or to be institutionalized, students with mild or moderate learning problems often dropped out of school long before graduating (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). As recently as 1958, court cases ruled in favor of excluding students with disabilities from a public school education. In *Department of Public Welfare v. Haas* in 1958, the Supreme Court of Illinois maintained that the state's compulsory education laws did not require a "free public education for the 'feeble-minded' or to children who were 'mentally deficient' and who, because of their limited intelligence were unable to reap the benefits of a good education" (Yell, 1998, p. 55). Eventually, however, advocating for the education of all students would soon become the norm.

By the middle decades of the 18th century, a spirit of reform was abroad in both Europe and North America. The influence of the European Enlightenment was pervasive, especially in the political literature of the time. America's revolution sought to achieve liberty (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). "One result of the influence of 18th century thought was the declaration that something must be done for the weak, the dependent, the disabled – for those who could not earn a living in competition with the fit" (Winzer, 1993, p. 77). Americans responded and established a growing number of institutions designed to cater to the unique needs of exceptional individuals. Educational activists included special education in their efforts (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). Men such as Henry Barnard and Horace Mann were insightful critics on learning environments in general and involved themselves in the campaign for the establishment of

institutions to serve the special needs of deaf, blind, and mentally disabled children as well as those designated as “potential delinquents” (Winzer, 1993, p. 79).

The institutional developments that began in the 1820s are particularly noteworthy because they advance alongside the extension of the common schools and lead to the emergence of forms that are still present but slowly diminishing (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). The emergence of specialized institutions marked a significant shift in attitudes toward the treatment of disabled individuals. In 1817, The Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons (later called the American Asylum) opened in Hartford, Connecticut (Florian, 2010). Five years later, Kentucky opened the first state school for deaf children followed by the opening of the Asylum for the Blind in Massachusetts in 1832 (Hammel and Hourigan, 2011). Soon after these asylums opened, Horace Mann began the revival of the common schools, and New York State funded its first school for mentally retarded children (Winzer, 1993, p. 82).

Developments in special education and institutional development advanced together. Demographics, economics, culture, and ethnicity were all factors in the expansion of schools. Institutions were not a primary concern of government so many were run privately (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). Although many progressive educational thinkers made attempts at instituting special schools for students with disabilities, progress in special education did not advance until the early 19th century. Children who could not be easily accommodated were included in the development of special education by progressive thinkers. The disabled population was embraced by educational leaders including Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, and Egerton Ryerson. Some children with special needs were deemed “irresponsible, and in many cases, dangerous to the community”. If special education had been added to a successful existing educational system, it may have developed otherwise and institutions may never have existed (McGann, 1888, p. 5).

Throughout the 19th century, the belief that disabled people were incapable of self-care persisted. Reformers agreed that special students needed a school that would help them instead of hiding them in an institution as a public charity (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). As the 19th century ended, North America was facing new and increasing challenges. A new kind of moral entrepreneurs emerged and highlighted the importance of the preservation of society while satisfying the needs of all people (Fourian, 2010).

One of the first of many laws to come that changed special education in schools were attendance laws which required all students to be present a certain number of days out of each school year (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011). Once attendance laws were enacted, schools could no longer ignore an entire population of children based on intellectual level. Segregated classrooms were a way to satisfy the law while meeting the needs of teachers and administration unwilling to change classroom culture (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). Deaf children were the first to be served in the new settings later followed by blind student and finally mentally retarded students (Fourian, 2010). From 1910 to 1930 there was a significant increase in the enrollment of students with special needs. Boston (1898) encouraged the movement by establishing its first class for mentally retarded children (Winzer, 1993). The increase in assessment knowledge was a large contributing factor to the development of classes for a wider variety of students with disabilities (Fourian, 2010). This also led to a greater emphasis on teacher training and professional associations. Alexander Graham Bell mentioned the idea of special education around 1884 after a meeting of the National Education Association (Winzer, 1993).

The exclusion of students with special needs from education would not last forever. In *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that school segregation by race was unconstitutional, despite resource distribution. This was the first time the federal

government advocated for students who experienced inequality and prejudice at school, and it set a path for future legislation for individuals with disabilities (Ford & King, 2014).

In 1958, P.L. 85-926 provided grants for training special education personnel and John F. Kennedy's Panel on Mental Retardation convened in 1962. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965 to protect and provide for students from disadvantaged backgrounds so they would have equal access to the public education system (Cross, 2015). For example, one of the ESEA provisions established the free and reduced lunch program for impoverished populations. A critical part of the ESEA was the grant program that encouraged states to create and improve programs for students with disabilities. ESEA offered new grants to districts serving low-income students, federal grants for text and library books, it created special education centers, and created scholarships for low-income college students (Cross, 2015). Additionally, the law provided federal grants to state educational organizations to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education (Yettick, Baker, Wickersham, & Hupfield, 2014). ESEA was later revised in 1970 as the Education of the Handicapped Act (P.L. 91-230) and continued to support state run programs for individuals with disabilities (Cross, 2015).

By the 1970s a more humanistic moment had emerged. It represented a change in society's attitudes towards people with disabilities. A goal of society was to regard exceptional people as individuals and treat them fairly and humanely (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). Educators came to agree that all children had the right to an appropriate education at public expense. Lastly, in 1975 P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, was passed by Congress (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011). This case paved the way for future legislation that protected the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Two additional court cases that paved the way for inclusionary special education were *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* and *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (Romberg, 2011). In 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children sued Pennsylvania regarding a state law that allowed public schools to deny education to certain children who had not reached a mental age of five (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). This law had been consistently used by the state to deny education to students considered too burdensome to integrate into school and classroom environments. The case alleged due process violations by the state. PARC argued that all children can benefit from a program of education and training, and that the absence of this education could lead to negative consequences for the development of children. With education however, these children could eventually attain some level of self care, and the earlier that education is provided, the more they would be able to benefit from it. PARC was the first significant challenge to laws around the country prohibiting or excluding students with mental (Yell, Rogers, and Rogers, 1998).

Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972) was a case where the students in the class had been identified as having behavioral problems or having mental retardation, emotionally disturbed, and/or hyperactive (Hoagland-Hanson, 2015). All of the students in this case had been excluded from school or denied educational services that would have addressed the needs that arose from their identified disabilities. The parents and guardians of the students successfully filed suit, arguing that the failure of the school board in the District of Columbia to provide them with a public school education meant that their right to an education had been denied. The federal district court in the District of Columbia agreed that the children's right to a public school education under the laws of the District of Columbia had not

been provided (Hoagland-Hanson, 2015). The judge explained that the school board's failure to meet its mandate was not excused by its argument that there were insufficient funds available to pay for the services that the children needed. The board's duty to educate the children outweighed its interest in preserving its resources. If district funds were too sparse to provide all of the required programming, then the board had to seek other means of financing a public school education for every child. The inadequacies present in the school system, whether caused by insufficient funding or poor administration, could not be allowed to have an increased impact on students with disabilities. The school board was ordered to adopt a detailed remedial plan in order to ensure that the children received their right to equal protection under the law (Winzer, 1993). The court-ordered comprehensive remedial plan included many elements that eventually had a national impact. Among these provisions, the court order mandated a free public education for each child with a disability, requirement that children suspected of having disabilities be identified and evaluated, documentation delineating the individual special education services for each child, the development of due process procedures regarding suspensions or expulsions from school, and the creation of procedures that granted parents the right to challenge the system if they disagreed with any aspect of the placement of their children (Hoagland-Hanson, 2015).

Legislation has provided education, employment, housing, and other rights previously denied for individuals with disabilities. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 defined a *handicapped person* and *appropriate education*. It also prohibited discrimination against students with disabilities in federally funded programs. It required states to provide free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities from ages 5 to 18. It introduced the idea for individualized education programs to meet students' needs. After it was amended, the

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Education for All Handicapped Children Act became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (Carson, 2015).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 94-142, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, P.L. 93-112, have significantly improved the opportunities for individuals with disabilities (Peterson 2013). IDEA was previously referred to as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975, (Peterson, 2013). It was later expanded upon and amended into IDEA in 1990 and most recently amended again into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004.

IDEA began with establishing a people first language for referring to people with disabilities. A child with special needs was no longer called a special needs child but a child with special needs. Putting the word child first emphasized that individuals with special needs were people first, and their disabilities did not define them. It extends special education services to include social work, assistive technology, and rehabilitation services (Pasachoff, 2014). Due process and confidentiality for students and parents were address as well by IDEA (Peterson, 2013). IDEA added two new categories of disability: traumatic brain injury and autism. It also required states to educate students with disabilities for transition to employment and provide transition services and programs by the time they are 16 years old. IDEA was later revised to protect the rights of even more children and shield the rights of those already in place. IDEA of 1997 required that all students continue to receive services even if they have been expelled from school. Schools now assumed greater responsibility for ensuring that students have access to the general education curriculum. Staff who worked in mainstream classrooms could assist general education students when needed. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) development team met to design an educational plan, list of curriculum modifications, and techniques for handling

behavioral issues, and was required to include a general education teacher (Peterson, 2013).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 further strengthened the ideas and plans set forth by previous legislation. This act was passed only three years after the No Child Left Behind Act of 2003. IDEIA increased federal funds to provide early intervention services to students who do not need special education or related services. It eliminated short-term objectives in an IEP for students who do not take state-wide assessments and adopted policies designed to prevent a disproportionate representation of students in special education by race and ethnicity (Hill & Hill, 2012). By 2012–13, 13 percent of total public school enrollment received services under IDEIA (Peterson, 2013). This legislation was designed to ensure that all children with disabilities receive an appropriate education through special education and related services (Pasachoff, 2014).

Legislation was instrumental to the development of special education and the shift to inclusionary classrooms. The history of special education is important to understand because it has shaped the educational system of today. Special education laws have been set to make sure every student receives the education and services appropriate for them.

The Development of Inclusion in Music Education

Disability-rights advocates argued that while legislation is important and necessary, alone, it is insufficient. In addition, they believe it is important to question the social stigmas and unofficial barriers that sometimes inhibit individuals from becoming full members of society. That is why in recent years, disability-rights advocates have also focused on how disability labels can create an inferior status for those with disabilities (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013). While state and federal laws have specific definitions that educators must legally follow when creating IEPs and services for students, looking at a disability's definition can show other subtle ways

discrimination still exists. As educators become aware of this subtle discrimination, they may appropriately modify their teaching to better meet the needs of their students.

The medical definition and model of disabilities serve as the foundation for laws and special education and help individuals with disabilities receive the help they needed to improve their quality of life. However, some disability-rights advocates have argued that the medical model fails to capture an equally important part of possessing a disability. What it feels like to be labeled as disabled in society today is of great value. Rather than use a medical description, advocates prefer to use what they call a social model of disability, which defines disability as a social position and not a limitation.

To show the difference between disability as a medical condition and disability as a social position, some scholars make a distinction between an impairment and a disability. In his book, *Bending over Backwards*, Lennard J. Davis (2002) wrote, "Impairment is the physical fact of lacking an arm or a leg. Disability is the social process that turns an impairment into a negative by creating barriers to access. An impairment involves a loss or diminution of sight, hearing, mobility, mental ability, and so on. An impairment, however, only becomes a disability when society creates environments with barriers – affective, sensory, cognitive, or architectural." In the classroom, teachers can modify their instruction to meet the needs of every student in their classes. In that way impairments are reduced and disabilities are accommodated. For example, teachers can alter music notation methods to accommodate students with disabilities. Students with visual impairments could learn the basic functions of music notation by being provided with music braille (Siligo, 2005). Although music braille is unlike standard notation, it allows students to experience music reading and writing in another form.

Finally, the social model of disability even applies to students who have learning

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disabilities and behavioral and emotional disorders. This model stated that students think about and process information and music differently than students without disabilities. Students with behavioral disorders, for example, typically have average intelligence, but because they act and think differently than students without disabilities, they are more likely to drop out of school (Adamek & Darrow, 2010). The social model also suggests that a teacher who does not adapt his or her instruction to those students' unique behaviors and thinking can create barriers. While providing accommodations for students with behavioral disorders may be challenging, music teachers can offer a successful experience for these students by giving clear, simple, unambiguous directions, using consistent classroom management, and wording directions positively. Music educators and therapists Adamek and Darrow (2010) explain that asking a student to do something is a more positive approach than telling them to not doing something. Similarly, music educators Alice M. Hammel and Ryan M. Hourigan (2011) suggested that for students with learning disabilities, teachers can make accommodations by attending to the modality, pacing, size, and color of the instruction and materials. They recommended that teachers use many modes such as kinesthetic, visual, aural, and tactile when introducing new material, slow instruction down, enlarge music and other materials, and use different colors to help students process information (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011).

When working with students with special needs, it is important to follow the law and also the spirit. Merely fulfilling the modifications in a student's IEP, for example, is not sufficient. It is also important to strive toward the ideals of these laws by providing an education that honors and supports students. This means that teachers not only comply with law but also continually seek ways to make their instruction more inclusive. Music teachers who intend to achieve music goals in their work with special learners might consider the acquisition of special teaching

techniques and develop skills in selecting and adapting appropriate resource materials. Listening, seeing, moving, and feeling are all important in the music education curriculum, making music a discipline to help develop sensory perception and psychomotor skills (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2007). Music education can also aid in developing basic skills in all children. Children learn through musical activities, since music helps develop skills that are necessary for cognitive, affective, and psychomotor functioning utilized in all areas of the school curriculum (Zigmond, 1997). Because of the flexibility and vast resources available in music, a single activity can include children of widely differing abilities. Music provides an alternative means through which children who are unable or unwilling to speak can express feelings and ideas (Hourigan, 2007). This way, music allows every student to be challenged.

The primary purpose of music education programs for children with disabilities is to actively involve the child in meaningful music experiences that will develop music concepts and skills appropriate to individual functioning level (Hammel, 2001). Specific learning skills are generally grouped into categories such as gross motor, language, auditory, and visual (Hammel, 2001). All learning skills can be addressed in certain music situations, but some are nearly always inherent in every music activity. These skills are part of the perceptual motor classification, since most music experiences involve sensory perception such as listening, seeing, and feeling combined with motor acts such as singing, playing, and moving.

To consider a child with disabilities for successful placement into a regular general or instrumental music class, teachers must be aware of the individual's mental age, motor development, abstracting abilities, attention span, and social development, as well as the level of certain academic skills (Abramo, 2012). Music education programs designed for the majority sometimes make heavy demands on perceptual motor skills, integration, symbolization, and

physical energy. Since the majority of children with disabilities are characteristically lacking in some of these skills, music teachers may need to be very aware of individual learning styles and needs in order to plan for their successful participation (York and Reynolds, 1996). The versatility of music activities and the multiple general education benefits that accumulate from music education experiences, tend to make the general music class an appropriate class for inclusion of students with disabilities.

Music is a content area of the curriculum that not only strives for the achievement of facts and skills, but provides all children with learning experiences that are basic to learning in other areas of the curriculum as well (Hourigan, 2007). Because of its multisensory demands, music can contribute to helping children learn how to both process and react to sensory stimulation. Since most music activities are perceptual motor by nature, these abilities are continually being developed in the music class and music lesson.

The music education curriculum focuses on activities in which children conceptualize through experiencing the elements of music such as melody, rhythm, form, tone, and color, as well as the styles of music, and uses of music in society (Abramo, 2012). In addition, by relating music elements to other art media, the children may learn to integrate and synthesize concepts that are common to all the arts. Finally, through active participation in music, children are directed in analyzing music processes by discovering how the various elements of music are combined.

Music is unique in that it can trigger memories, awaken emotions, and intensify our social experiences (Adamek & Darrow, 2010). Through music we are exposed to the thoughts, emotions, and ideas of others, and the experience of music listening enables us to learn how to combine elements of sound in a coherent communicative stream (MacDonald & Miell, 2000).

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Music allows us to develop self-knowledge, self-identity, and group identity, enabling us to share thoughts, emotions, and feelings, and understand those subtle and unique human experiences that cannot easily be put into words (Hodges, 2005).

Autism: Defining Autism and its Interaction with Music

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is an umbrella term used to describe a continuum of diagnoses that include autism, Asperger's disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS). ASD is characterized by deficits in communication, impairments in social interactions, and restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior (Hodges, 2005). Leo Kanner first described childhood autism in 1943 as affecting children in the area of social dysfunction and unusual responses (Carter, Davis, Klin & Volkmar, 2005). Autism is a complex developmental disability that usually begins to appear during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain (Kern & Aldridge, 2007). Typically, symptoms begin to appear around eighteen months of age. They may include communication delays, repeating words or phrases, unresponsiveness to verbal cues, social difficulties, oversensitivity (sound, light, etc.), resistance to change, lack of direct eye contact, and odd or unusual repetitive play (Simpson & Keen, 2011). Children may display some or all of these symptoms.

Autism is one of five disorders that fall under the umbrella of pervasive development disorders. These disorders include autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, Rhett's disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013). Children are often identified as being on the spectrum. This refers to the idea that a child may fall on the spectrum of pervasive development disorders (Zangwill,

2013). The specific diagnosis, including the severity, may give educators an idea as to how a student may behave, communicate, or acquire academic skills.

Because of the dramatic increase in diagnosis rates, some developmental pediatricians have begun to specialize in the treatment of children on the spectrum. Dr. Richard Solomon is one such pediatrician who treats, does research, and trains therapists on how to reach children with autism (Solomon, 2001). Solomon (2001) explained that children on the spectrum tend to be introverted and would rather live within their own, isolated world. When articulating this idea, he uses the concept of the “comfort zone” proposed by psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky (Molnar-Szakacs & Heaton, 2012). The comfort zone concept is part of a larger learning theory developed by Vygotsky in the early part of the twentieth century called the Zone of Proximal Development. Children with autism often struggle with many aspects of everyday life that cause them to retreat into their comfort zone. Their tendency to retreat into their comfort zone can interfere with skills that are vital to their education (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013).

Many music educators have explained that the children they teach who have autism have an affinity or a talent for music. According to music therapist and researcher Michael Thaut (1999), “Children on the autistic spectrum often have a remarkable capability and responsiveness to music as compared to most other areas of their behavior, as well as in comparison with typical children.” Children who cannot communicate verbally may acquire skills in music that exceed their typical peers. The challenge for music teachers is discovering how to access this responsiveness in the midst of all of the other distractions that arise for the child.

Children on the spectrum typically have unique processes by which they acquire and retain understanding and demonstrate knowledge (Hourigan & Hourigan, 2009). An important part of the consultation with other teachers, parents, and administrators is to uncover the learning

processes used in other classes. Questions that could be asked may include the following: "Does he or she respond to visual or aural teaching? Does routine comfort the child? Are there sensitivities that may impede his or her learning? What is the current cognitive level of the child? Answers to these questions will give you a foundation from which to start your individualization or accommodation of instruction" (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013, p. 40). Children on the spectrum who are high functioning, when in the moment of performing, seem to go through an extra layer of decoding instruction (Hourigan & Hourigan, 2009). They will seem to be behind; however, with repetition of concepts, they tend to eventually catch up. Children with autism also may have difficulties with fine motor (small movement) or gross motor skill (large movement) that may present challenges (Zangwill, 2013).

A behavior and musical understandings self-evaluation which is completed by the students and the music teacher together, can help a child with autism understand his or her progress in music class. Teachers may see progress in small steps. A rewards system can often aid in allowing the student to understand his or her own progress and encourage him or her to further their study. Music teachers should check in with the child's classroom teacher and support staff. If an aide accompanies the child, expectations should be clear as to what the aide should and should not do. If the child has a behavior checklist, it may provide a way to develop a more detailed relationship with the child.

Music teachers must be patient when children on the spectrum exhibit sensory needs (Florian, 2010). Students will need time to adjust to their surroundings. They may already have strategies in place for when they become over or under stimulated. Since making music is a form of sensory input, it is important to understand the student and what causes him or her to struggle with sensory issues. Simple strategies, such as reducing the volume of music, slowing the

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teaching pace, allowing the student to go for a walk or take a break with an aide, and more repetition, will enhance the student's success.

Another primary feature of autism is difficulty in the ability to relate to people, objects, and events (Kern & Aldridge, 2007). Children with autism tend to withdraw or be socially unresponsive. Music can be a perfect setting for children on the spectrum to strengthen their social skills and by default assist other students in your class to understand their classmate (Florian, 2010). Anything a teacher can do to involve all students in aiding a classmate is a step in the right direction. This may include rotating a helper to assist in group activities that involve all of the students. When asked to help with a classmate with special needs, children tend to take ownership of the learning community and shift some responsibility from the child's aide or the music teacher (Kern & Aldridge, 2007).

Improvements in the early identification of autism have enabled researchers to study social and communicative behaviors in infants and young children at risk for autism. Numerous studies have reported imitation deficits in autism (Rogers & Pennington, 1991 and Vanvuchelen et al., 2007). Rogers and Pennington (1991) suggested that motor imitation may be one of the primary deficits, and the authors highlighted two subcomponents of imitation that might underlie the imitative deficit in autism- correspondence with others and the sequencing of intentional movements. In support of this theory, Vanvuchelen et al. (2007) found that individuals with autism showed impaired performance in both gestural imitation and general motor skills, suggesting that their imitation deficits may be part of a broader perceptual-motor problem.

Young children with autism are also unlikely to voluntarily share their experience with others, and often avoid initiating interactions with multiple social partners, even when guided to do so (Zangwill, 2013). Other studies such as that of Yirmiya (1989) have specifically focused

on the role of emotion processing deficits in social understanding and reciprocity have shown that individuals with ASD display less positive emotion to their social partners when compared to typically developing peers and experience more negative affective exchanges with others (Yirmiya, 1989). Reduced attention to other's emotional cues may result in negative peer interactions and increased difficulties in resolving conflict with others. Although some experimental studies directly testing emotion recognition have failed to observe deficits, the findings from the majority of studies are consistent with clinical reports of poor emotional understanding (Williams & Happe, 2010).

Emotionally, transitions between activities can be difficult for children on the spectrum and can be a cause of high anxiety (Molnar-Szakacs & Heaton, 2012). Transitions can range from traveling from a child's classroom to the music classroom to completing one activity and beginning another. As mentioned earlier, anything you can do to prepare a student may help alleviate some anxiety. Some tools to alleviate anxiety might include playing recorded music during transitions, providing verbal cues that one activity is almost done and describing what should be expected next, providing a written schedule for the student, and permitting the child time to adjust to new activities (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013). In every classroom, there are students of widely different learning abilities. The students with disabilities, including Autism, may need extra time and effort from the instructor to keep up with peers or to learn at an individual pace. Music allows for great creative freedom and expression, and each student is allowed the opportunity to learn and succeed in the music room.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to inform readers about students with autism and offer suggestions that will lead to more independence for the child in the music classroom. This

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includes allowing a child with autism the opportunity to establish classroom routines, appropriate behavior, communication, and the ability to acquire music skills and understandings.

Following this paper are a series of lesson plans focused on the inclusion of students with autism in the general music classroom. They include elements of performance, listening, improvisation, and composition, and they include a paragraph about why that lesson plan would meet the needs of all students including those with autism.

These lesson plans may serve as a possible model for music educators that they may design for their students with special needs. Each lesson plan is structured utilizing national music standards. Each lesson plan includes lesson objectives, a materials list, adaptive techniques, and detailed procedures for instruction. These lesson plans utilize techniques noted in the gathered research. It is my hope that general music educators will find these lesson plans useful and will develop their own lesson plans using this template.

Autism is a complicated disorder. Music teachers may gain further understanding by participating in the special education process and by obtaining a copy of each child's Individualized Education Program document. A combination of being aware of cues and having a working relationship with the child's educational team may result in a clearer understanding of the student. Students with autism can learn from and enjoy music classes if they are given proper support structures and adaptations to help them make connections to their teachers, their peers, and the curriculum.

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Appendix A

Listening and Singing Lesson

Objectives: Students will be able to sing together as a group.

National Standards applied in this lesson:

Standard 1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Georgia Performance Standards:

MKGM.1 – Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

- a. Sing simple melodies in a limited range using appropriate head voice accompanied and unaccompanied.
- b. Echo simple singing and speech patterns.

Materials:

- Baby Bumblebee sheet music

Note: The lyrics for this lesson have been changed from the lyrics given in the original source. The teacher may choose to change any lyrics or use the original source's.

Sequence of Activities: The students will...

1. Enter the room and sit in circle on the carpet with the teacher.
2. Listen to the teacher sing, with proper vocal technique, the first verse of the song

I'm bringing home a baby bumblebee.
Won't my mommy be so proud of me?
I'm bringing home a baby bumblebee.
Ouch! It stung me!
3. Answer listening question about the lyrics

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- a. Teacher: "What did I bring home to my mom?"
4. Sing, with proper vocal technique, the first verse with the teacher while holding hands in a cup position like they have a bumblebee inside of their hands. Students will move their hands from side to side with the steady beat.
5. Listen to the teacher give instructions about what to listen for in the next verse
 - a. Teacher: "Listen to the words I am singing, and raise your hand when you think you know what I'm bringing home to my mom this time."
6. Listen to the teacher sing the second verse

I'm bringing home a baby rattlesnake.
Won't my mommy shiver and shake?
I'm bring home a baby rattlesnake.
Ouch! It bit me!
7. Sing the second verse with the teacher. Students will hold their hands flat together like they have just clapped. While they are singing, they may move their hands around in a wiggle motion with the steady beat.
8. Listen to the teacher sing the third verse

I'm bring home a baby dinosaur.
Won't my mommy scream when he roars?
I'm bringing home a baby dinosaur.
Aw...He's friendly!
9. Sing with the third verse with the teacher. Students will hold their hands up like they have dinosaur arms. While they are singing, they may move from side to side like a dinosaur with the steady beat.

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10. Sing the entire song with the teacher using proper vocal technique and body movements.
11. Summarize learning objectives and receive feedback if they were accomplished.

This lesson plan accommodates all younger students including those who may be too young to be identified as having autism. Many times, a student cannot be identified as having autism until the second grade but will exhibit symptoms of autism at an earlier age. This lesson does not require any loud music. If a student is choosing not to sing, he or she can just do the body movements instead without feeling isolated from their peers. The students and teacher are sitting in this lesson so if a student is feeling uncomfortable in one spot, that student may get up and walk around behind the circle if he or she chooses (Hourigan & Hourigan, 2009).

Baby Bumblebee

Traditional

I'm bring-ing home my ba-by bum-ble-bee,

Won't my mom-my be so proud of me? I'm bring-ing home my ba-by

bum-ble-bee,

Spoken: Ouch! it stung me!

2) I'm squishing up the baby bumblebee,
Won't my mommy be so proud of me,
I'm squishing up a baby bumblebee,
Spoken: Ooh! It's yucky!

3) I'm wiping off the baby bumblebee,
Won't my mommy be so proud of me,
I'm wiping off the baby bumblebee,
Spoken: Now my mommy won't be mad at me!



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Appendix B

Singing, Playing Instruments, and Moving Lesson Series

Lesson #1

Objectives: Students will be able to sing Shake Those Simmons Down. Students will be able to read music and perform on Orff instruments (both pitched and non-pitched percussion).

National Standards applied in this lesson:

Standard 1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 5: Reading and notating music

Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Georgia Performance Standards:

M3GM.1 – Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

- a. Sing melodies in a limited range using appropriate head voice accompanied and unaccompanied.

M3GM.3 – Reading and notating music

- a. Read simple notation including quarter note, quarter rest and paired eighth notes using non-traditional and/or traditional icons.
- b. Identify non-traditional and/or traditional representations of simple quarter note, quarter rest, and paired eighth note rhythmic patterns in response to teacher performance.

Materials:

- Shake Those Simmons Down sheet music

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- Projector/Smartboard
- Tambourines
- Bass xylophones

Note: Other instruments may be substituted for tambourines and/or xylophones.

Sequence of Activities: The students will...

1. Enter the room and sit in two straight lines parallel to the front of the room
2. Listen to the teacher explain:

“Raise your hand if you’ve ever had a fruit called a persimmon. A persimmon looks like a mix between a pumpkin, a tomato, and an orange. We are going to learn a song about persimmons, but we’re going to call them ‘simmons’ for short.”

3. Listen to the teacher sing the first verse with proper vocal technique:

Circle left, do-oh do-oh.

Circle left, do-oh do-oh.

Circle left, do-oh do-oh.

Shake those ‘simmons down.

4. Listen to the teacher ask the students to keep a steady beat on their knees with both hands while the teacher sings the first verse again.
5. Listen to the teacher sing the first verse while students keep a steady beat on their knees.
6. Listen to the teacher give instructions for the next part:

“I’m going to show you something different and I’d like you to watch my hands and listen to the words I’m saying.”

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7. Listen to the teacher clap the rhythm. The rhythm is two quarter rests, two eighth notes, then one quarter note. This rhythm is repeated until the end of the verse. During the two quarter rests, the teacher will hold hands out to the side with palms up and move them up and down for each beat. The teacher will clap the two eighth notes and quarter note while saying "Shake them down" in rhythm.
8. Listen to the teacher ask the students to join in and repeat the pattern until it is clear that all students can complete the rhythm accurately.
9. Listen to the teacher sing the second verse while the students clap the ostinato.

Circle right, do-oh do-oh.

Circle right, do-oh do-oh.

Circle right, do-oh do-oh.

Shake those 'simmons down.

10. Listen to the teacher explain:

"Now, I want row one to keep the steady beat on your knees, and I would like the second row to clap the ostinato."

11. Perform the rhythmic ostinato in rows.

12. Listen to the teacher explain:

"This time, I'm going to sing, while you all play the steady beat and the rhythm."

13. Listen to the teacher sing, with proper vocal technique, the first and second verses while the students keep a steady beat and perform the ostinato.

14. Listen to the teacher say:

"Let's try it one more time. This time I'm going to change the words a little bit, but you all keep playing the steady beat and the clapping rhythm."

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15. Listen to the teacher sing last verse while performing steady beat and clapping rhythm.

Do-se-do, do-oh do-oh

Do-se-do, do-oh do-oh

Do-se-do, do-oh do-oh

Shake those 'simmons down.

Transferring Ostinato to Instruments

Note: The teacher will choose some students to go play the bass xylophones and some to play the tambourine while the rest of the class continues to tap their knees to the steady beat and clap the tambourine rhythm. The number of students placed on each instrument should be chosen by the teacher. The purpose of only having a few students on the instruments at first is to allow the class to familiarize themselves with the sounds while they are still becoming comfortable performing the ostinato as body percussion. Each student will play a G and D on the xylophones. They will play the G with the mallet in their left hand and the D with the mallet in their right hand.

16. Practice alternating hands playing the notes G and D, and the tambourine players will review the rhythm and proper tambourine technique

- a. Hold mallets similar to bike handles. Pinky fingers should not be apart from other fingers, and hands should be grasping the mallet without squeezing.
- b. Tambourines should be held in the left hand and should be played with the tips of fingers on the right hand on the edge of the face of the instrument

Note: If the students with Autism are uncomfortable with the tambourine, they may choose to play the maracas or hand-held jingle bells.

17. Listen to the teacher instruct the students:

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“Since we have played the steady beat and the rhythm pattern a few times, everybody sing along with me this time. Remember, the first time we sing through the song, we sing ‘circle left’. The second time we sing through the song, we sing ‘circle right’. The last time we sing through the song, we sing ‘do-se-do’.

Our xylophone and tambourine players are going to play with us as well.”

18. Perform ostinato on instruments or body percussion at the teacher’s discretion as they all sing.

19. Summarize learning objectives and receive feedback if they were accomplished.

Appendix B

Singing, Playing Instruments, and Moving Lesson Series

Lesson #2

Objectives: Students will be able to sing Shake Those Simmons Down with proper vocal technique. Students will be able to read music and accurately perform on Orff instruments ostinato taught in previous lessons with proper playing technique and accurate pitches and rhythms.

National Standards applied in this lesson:

Standard 1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 5: Reading and notating music

Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Georgia Performance Standards:

M3GM.1 – Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

- a. Sing melodies in a limited range using appropriate head voice accompanied and unaccompanied.

M3GM.3 – Reading and notating music

- a. Read simple notation including quarter note, quarter rest and paired eighth notes using non-traditional and/or traditional icons.
- b. Identify non-traditional and/or traditional representations of simple quarter note, quarter rest, and paired eighth note rhythmic patterns in response to teacher performance.

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Materials:

- Shake Those Simmons Down sheet music
- Projector/Smartboard
- Tambourines
- Bass xylophones

Note: Teachers may choose to use different Orff instruments if they prefer.

Sequence of Activities: The students will...

1. Enter the room and sit at instruments that the teacher has placed around the room. The teacher will place each student at his or her designated instrument.
2. Review, without playing instruments, the steady beat of Shake Those Simmons Down and the tambourine rhythm. The teacher will sing while the students tap their knees to the beat and clap their hands to the tambourine rhythm.

Circle left, do-oh do-oh.

Circle left, do-oh do-oh.

Circle left, do-oh do-oh.

Shake those 'simmons down.

Circle right, do-oh do-oh.

Circle right, do-oh do-oh.

Circle right, do-oh do-oh.

Shake those 'simmons down.

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Do-se-do, do-oh do-oh

Do-se-do, do-oh do-oh

Do-se-do, do-oh do-oh

Shake those 'simmons down.

3. Review proper playing technique for the xylophone and tambourine.
 - a. Hold mallets similar to bike handles. Pinky fingers should not be apart from other fingers, and hands should be grasping the mallet without squeezing.
 - b. Tambourines should be held in the left hand and should be played with the tips of fingers on the right hand.

Note: One half of students may play the xylophone, and the other half may play the tambourine. Student instrument assignments should be chosen by the teacher.

4. Sing while performing on body percussion all three verses of the song.
5. Perform on instruments with proper singing and playing technique all three verses of Shake Those Simmons Down.
6. Rotate instruments until all students have had a chance to play all instruments.

Note: If students with Autism are overwhelmed by the number of transition changes, the teacher may choose to have those students stay in specific instrument groups.

7. Summarize learning objectives and receive feedback if they were accomplished.

This lesson plan (along with the previous lesson in this series) is inclusive of all students because the students with autism have the option of which instrument to pick, or they may pick to only sing. The xylophone or tambourine sounds may be too loud for the students with autism to listen to because they may be sensitive to sounds, so those students may pick another

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instrument such as a bass bar. The instruments have a wide variety of textures and sounds so the students with autism are not limited to listening to just one sound for the entire class period (Simpson & Keen, 2011).

Appendix B

Singing, Playing Instruments, and Moving Lesson Series

Lesson #3

Objectives: Students will be able to sing Shake Those Simmons Down with proper vocal technique. Students will be able to read music and accurately perform on Orff instruments ostinato taught in previous lessons with proper playing technique and accurate pitches and rhythms. Students will add movement to the piece and will be more autonomous on the Orff instrument parts.

National Standards applied in this lesson:

Standard 1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 5: Reading and notating music

Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Georgia Performance Standards:

M3GM.1 – Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

- a. Sing melodies in a limited range using appropriate head voice accompanied and unaccompanied.

M3GM.3 – Reading and notating music

- a. Read simple notation including quarter note, quarter rest and paired eighth notes using non-traditional and/or traditional icons.

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- b. Identify non-traditional and/or traditional representations of simple quarter note, quarter rest, and paired eighth note rhythmic patterns in response to teacher performance.

Materials:

- Shake Those Simmons Down sheet music
- Projector/Smartboard
- Tambourines
- Bass xylophones

Note: Teachers may choose to use different Orff instruments if they prefer.

Sequence of Activities: The students will...

1. Enter the room and sit in a circle
 - a. Review behavior expectations
2. Listen to the teacher explain

“We already learned the instrument parts to our new song, but I think we should do some dancing because that is what the song lyrics tell us to do! Think back to the words of the song, and raise your hand if you can tell me which direction we should go in first.”
3. Stand up and hold hands in a large circle
4. Watch the teacher demonstrate how the group will turn to the left and move forward.
 - a. Remain holding hands while moving and will point their bodies in the direction they are moving.
 - b. Walk to the steady beat.

Note: The teacher may instruct the students to walk in a step-feet together style if the teacher chooses. The teacher should demonstrate this technique.

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5. Sing through the first verse with the teacher and move to the left. The circle will spin to the left until the last line of the verse.
6. Crouch down on the last word of the verse, which is "down".
7. Listen to the teacher ask:

"Which direction does the song tell us to go in next?"

8. Sing through the second verse and walk the circle to the right with the same technique as before. Students should be pointed to the right and should be walking to the steady beat.
9. Crouch down on the last word of the verse again.
10. Watch the teacher demonstrate how the class will do-se-do in the next verse.

Note: The teacher should choose a student who will move around the circle by hooking arms with each student. The remaining students should keep the steady beat with their feet.

11. Sing through the third and final verse while students do-se-do and keep the steady beat.
12. Move to available bass xylophones and tambourines.

Note: Instrument groups should be at teacher's discretion based on instrument availability and class size.

13. Play the xylophone and tambourine ostinati using body percussion
14. Sing and play through Shake Them Simmons Down using Orff instruments and dancing using proper vocal and playing technique.
15. Rotate instruments at the teacher's discretion until every student has played and danced.
16. Answer teacher's questions and discuss why we study folk songs such as Shake Those Simmons Down.

- a. Why do we study folk songs?
- b. What can we learn from them?

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c. How did folk songs get passed down through the years?

This lesson plan is inclusive of all students because it allows for a diversity of activities. If there is a student with autism who cannot play the Orff instruments, he or she may decide to be the dance leader or remain playing body percussion. This allows the student to have some control over their movements while still participating in the lesson. Lastly, if there is a student with autism who is not comfortable playing alone, the teacher has the freedom to help the child while the rest of the class is playing through the song. At the end of this lesson series, the students should be able to perform with minimal help from the teacher, allowing the teacher to assist individual students as needed (Simpson & Keen, 2011).

Shake Those 'Simmons Down

Traditional

Andante

Soprano Recorder or Voice

Tamborine

Soprano Xylophone
Alto Xylophone
Bass Xylophone

Soprano Metallophone
Alto Metallophone
Bass Metallophone

Cir-cle left, do-oh, do-oh, Cir-cle left, do-oh, do-oh,

S. Rec./Voice

Tamb.

XY

MP

Cir-cle left, do-oh, do-oh, Shake those 'simmons down. 1. down. 2. down.

2) Circle right, do-oh, do-oh
Circle right, do-oh, do-oh
Circle right, do-oh, do-oh
Shake them 'simmons down.

3) Do-se-do, do-oh, do-oh
Do-se-do, do-oh, do-oh
Do-se-do, do-oh, do-oh
Shake them 'simmons down.

4) Swing your partner, do-oh, do-oh
Swing your partner, do-oh, do-oh
Swing your partner, do-oh, do-oh
Shake them 'simmons down.



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Appendix C

Composition and Improvisation Lesson

Objectives: Students will create multiple rhythm ostinati. Students will perform ostinati on non-pitched percussion instruments in groups and individually.

National Standards applied in this lesson:

Standard 2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Standard 3: Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments

Standard 4: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines

Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Georgia Performance Standards:

M3GM.2 – Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

- a. Perform rhythmic patterns using body percussion as well as a variety of instruments with appropriate technique.
- b. Perform simple body percussion and instrumental parts (e.g., ostinati) while other students play or sing contrasting parts

M3GM.4 – Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments

- a. The student will improvise simple rhythmic patterns using a variety of sound sources and answers to given rhythmic questions

Materials:

- Smartboard/Whiteboard
- 4 different kinds of pitched and/or non-pitched percussion instruments

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Note: For this lesson, students will be using tambourines, rhythm sticks, hand drums, and wood blocks. Teachers may choose to use other instruments depending on instrument availability and class size.

- Rhythm flashcards

Sequence of Activities: The students will...

1. Enter classroom and sit behind individual percussion instruments
2. Review classroom behavior expectations
3. Speak independently using Hofman, Peltó, and White theory rhythm syllables ("ta" and "ta-di") from rhythm flashcards in 4/4 time
 - a. Each rhythm will be performed as body percussion
 - a. Eighth notes = snapping
 - b. Quarter notes = clapping
 - c. Half notes = patting leg
 - d. Whole notes = hands slide on leg
4. Listen to the teacher improvise a four beat rhythm pattern and imitate, as a group, the rhythmic pattern on assigned instruments
5. Move into small groups, based on their instrument (woodblock, tambourine, hand drum, rhythm sticks) and compose a group rhythm using the following guidelines:
 - a. Four beats long
 - b. Any combination of half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, using cut-out notes provided
 - i. 4 quarter notes
 - ii. 2 half notes

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- iii. 4 sets of (2) eighth notes
6. Listen and review proper playing techniques:
 - a. Woodblock: soft mallet strikes, thumbs lined up with mallet grip
 - b. Hand drums: drums on the floor, hitting the drum with the fingertips
 - c. Rhythm sticks: one stick is steady while the other is held in the dominant hand and hits the steady stick in the middle
 - d. Tambourine: held in non-dominant hand, hit with fingertips around the outer edge of the tambourine face
 7. Listen to groups perform their rhythms for the class
 8. Perform the rhythms simultaneously by layering each group at a time. For example:
 - a. The teacher will start the hand drums playing their rhythm
 - b. While the hand drums are repeating their rhythm, the wood blocks will begin playing their rhythm
 - c. While the hand drums and woodblocks are continuing to repeat their rhythm, the tambourines will begin their rhythm
 - d. Finally, while the hand drums, wood blocks, and tambourines are repeating their rhythm, the rhythm sticks will start their rhythm
 - e. Students will continue to repeat the rhythm until the teacher motions for a cutoff
 9. Assign a name to their composition

Example: "Third Grade Rhythm Blues"

This lesson accommodates all students including those with autism because it (1) provides a structured plan without long transitions (2) allows the students to work in small

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groups where the children can help each other and discuss ideas (3) provides the freedom for different ideas and (4) enables the students to work on motor movements not as gross as running but also not as restricting as writing (Adamek & Darrow, 2005; Hourigan & Hourigan, 2009).

